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PATENT

Atty. Docket No. NMT-002

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

APPLICANT: Forde *et al.* CONFIRMATION NO.: 4305
SERIAL NUMBER: 09/977,971 ART UNIT: 3732
FILING DATE: October 17, 2001 EXAMINER: V. Bui
TITLE: Over-the-Wire Interlock Attachment/Detachment Mechanism

Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

AMENDMENT AND RESPONSE

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The following amendment and remarks are made in response to the Office action mailed from the United States Patent and Trademark Office on January 29, 2004 (the "Office action"), for which the shortened statutory period set for response expires on April 29, 2004. Fees for examining additional claims and consideration of a Fourth Supplemental Information Disclosure Statement are submitted with this paper. Applicants believe that no extension-of-time or other fees are required for this Amendment and Response to be entered and considered. However, please consider this a conditional petition for the proper extension, if one is required, and a conditional authorization to charge any additional fees necessary for entry and consideration of this paper to Deposit Account No. 20-0531.

Amendments to the Claims are reflected in the listing of claims which begins on page 2 of this paper.

Remarks begin on page 9 of this paper.

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